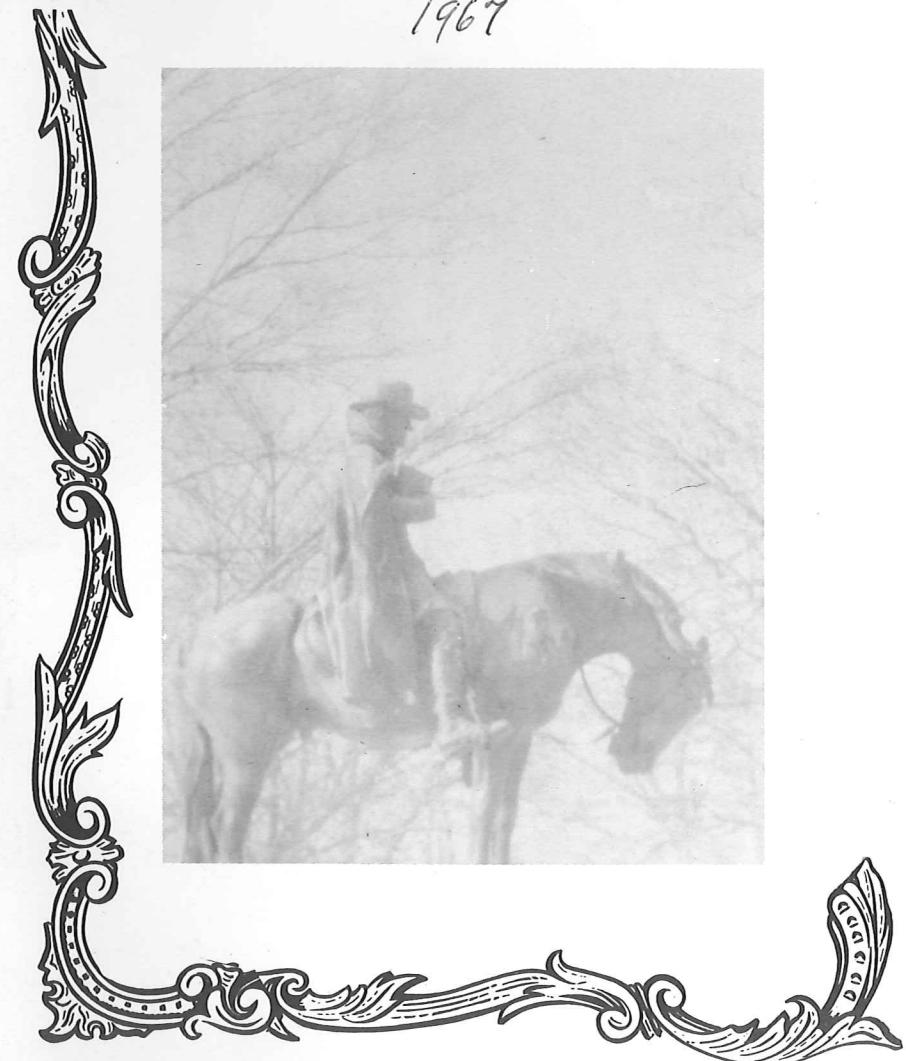


THE HISTORICAL TRAIL

1967



The Historical Trail

Yearbook of the Historical Society of the
Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of
The Methodist Church

Vol. 2

1967

No. 3

FOREWORD

This is the fifth year that the Historical Society of the Southern New Jersey Conference has published "The Historical Trail." It has been a means of bringing to our readers the historical growth and accomplishments in Southern New Jersey.

We greatly appreciate the response we have received from former issues. Requests have been received from individuals and institutions in various parts of the country to place their names on our annual mailing list.

As we read this present pamphlet we learn of the preaching places of our first Bishop, namely, Francis Asbury, as he crossed and recrossed our state assisting in planning and organizing some of our early Methodist churches.

One of our early Methodist ministers of New Jersey, The Rev. John Collins, migrated to the state of Ohio and was instrumental in establishing Methodism in that state.

Our Historical Society takes pride in the success that has attended many of our present day Churches. One of this splendid organizations is described in this issue by Mrs. Robert Moore of Moorestown.

We rejoice in the churches of the former Delaware Conference that are now a part of our conference. A historical sketch of several of these churches is included. To all who have contributed articles in this booklet of historical information we express our thanks.

D. C. Evans, President

Cover:
Statue of Francis Asbury on
The Drew University Campus,
Madison, N.J.

Photo courtesy of
Joseph Henry Bennett

JOHN COLLINS IN NEW JERSEY

John Collins was born November 1, 1769, at Collins Mills about a mile west of Smithville, in Gloucester County in Southern New Jersey. He was the second son of Dr. Richard and Sarah (Griffith) Collins.¹

Dr. Richard Collins was the first resident physician of Gloucester County. He came to America in 1765 and settled on a large tract of land in Galloway Township, Gloucester Co.²

Dr. Collins was married before coming to the New World from Ireland, and had one daughter. He married as his second wife, Sarah Griffith.³ She was a member of an old Quaker family of Pennsylvania.

Richard Collins was by faith a Roman Catholic. Most of the people in Smithville, Leeds Point and nearby Collins Mill were of the Quaker persuasion, with some of the people embracing the Calvinistic doctrine.⁴

Dr. Collins later was converted to Methodism. In a letter to a friend, "I have reared a son a Methodist, one a Quaker and one a Universalist -- -- --,"⁵

John Collins as a young man travelled widely, spending some time in the southern states including a year at Charlestown, South Carolina. He returned home to Collins Mills and helped his father on the plantation.

Within a short time, he began courting, Sarah Blackman, the daughter of David and Mary (Clark) Blackman, of English Creek in Great Egg Harbor.

Sarah Blackman was born to a Presbyterian family. Her grandfather, Andrew Blackman gave land at Cedar Bridge, now Bargaintown in Great Egg Harbor for a Presbyterian Meeting House, in 1764. Andrew Blackman and sons David and John were very active in the meeting house. One of the better known riders of the Presbyterian Circuit was the Rev. John Brainerd, who made the Meeting House one of his preaching stations.⁶

On her mother's side, she was a descendant of the Thomas Clark family of Clarks Mill, along the Mullica River. They were a staunch Presbyterian clan.⁷

In 1793, John Collins and Sarah Blackman were married. Sarah Collins proved to be most loyal in the labors of her husband.⁸

John Collins was converted to Methodism at the old Smithville Meeting House in 1794. The rider of the Bethel Circuit was Rev. Benjamin Fisler, a most able preacher.⁹

Collins obtained a local preachers license and preached on the circuits in West Jersey. His first sermon led to the conversion

of his wife's brother, Learner Blackman. Learner Blackman was to do much in planting Methodism in the Western Conference and in Mississippi.¹⁰

Rev. Richard Sneath who rode the BETHEL CIRCUIT in 1799, makes mention of John Collins in his Journal:

December 3, 1798 - "rode to D. Peacocks and met with Br. McCloskey, then in the afternoon we went to Br. Collins and lodged with him."

January 4, 1799 - "preached at Englishes M.H. administered the sacrament and held love feast and (Glory to God) we had a pentecost Br. Collins met me there who was very helpful in the stir."

May 27, 1799 " - visited some friends particularly Br. Collins."^{10b}

In 1803, John Collins removed with his family to the valley of the Little Miami River, in Clermont County, State of Ohio. He took up a large tract of land. This was a part of the land grants offered by the Federal Government after the American Revolution. This drew many people from all walks of life from the eastern states to the area.

A neighbor of John was the Rev. Phillip Gatch. Rev. Gatch did much in the early work of Methodism in Salem County in Southern New Jersey.¹¹

Rev. Collins, as a local preacher, started to preach on the Methodist circuits in the Miami District. In 1804, he preached the first Methodist sermon in Cincinnati, in Carter's Store on Main Street.¹²

The next year, 1805, through the efforts of Rev. John Collins the Old Stone Church was erected at the northwest corner of Broadway and Fifth Street, Cincinnati. This was replaced by the Wesley Chapel in 1831. The Chapel was built in the burial yard of the Old Stone Church, just west of the Church.¹³

The Baptists and the Calvinists were also active in the Miami River and Cincinnati area at this time.¹⁴

In 1804 there were some 9600 Methodists in the Western Conference. The Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church covered a large area.

During the year 1805, Bishop Francis Asbury made a tour of the Ohio District, preaching at Milford, Gatch, and Williamsburg.

Asbury makes the following entry in his Journal:

"We came on to MILFORD - Here are folks from most of the Eastern States and all professions -

— they have good land and this rarely makes people better.”¹⁵

Later in his Journal he writes: “On Friday we came down the east branch of the Little Miami to Judge Gatchs.”¹⁶

This was the Rev. Phillip Gatch who lived some miles below John Collins. Although both were active in Methodism and John Collins was born in the Jerseys and Phillip Gatch had worked in the State, no mention is made that they know each other. Francis Asbury does not mention Collins in his notes.

In the year 1807 Rev. John Collins joined the Western Conference on trial. During the same year, he built a log meeting house on his farm in Clermont Co. This was replaced by a second building in 1818 and in 1867 by the present structure.¹⁷

John and Sarah Collins had three sons and four daughters born to them. The sons were Wesley, 1799-1807, David and Richard.¹⁷ The daughters were Sarah Collins, 1805-1815, Belinda A., 1814-1834, Mary, —1831.¹⁸

The sons David and Richard probably grew to manhood. Nothing is known of them. Mary Collins Married the Rev. William Simmons a Methodist preacher.¹⁹

In 1819, Rev. John Collins became a Presiding Elder. His appointments in the Western Conference covered some thirty years with time taken out for two locations. On one of these locations he made a trip back to visit his father in Southern New Jersey.²⁰

In 1837, Rev. Collins took a superannuated relation retiring to his farm in the Little Miami River valley. On August 22, 1845, while on a visit to Maysville, Kentucky, he died at the age of 75 years.²¹

All writers agree that the Rev. John Collins was — — “a workman that needed not to be ashamed.”

FOOTNOTES

1. The Daily Union History of Atlantic City and County, John F. Hall, 1900 — page 384.
2. Map of Atlantic County by BEERS, COMSTOCK AND CLINE 1872. — for locations.
3. She was the daughter of John and (Jones) Griffith a travelling minister of the Quakers.
4. A Quaker Meeting was located some few feet east of the present Smithville Methodist Church. The spot is marked by a granite monument.
5. Halls History — page 384.
6. The Blackmans of Great Egg Harbor, Joseph Henry Bennett, 1962. Blackman and Zion Meeting Houses: Joseph Henry Bennett. 1963. published:
7. The Blackmans of Great Egg Harbor: Genealogical Table Andrew Blackman. Halls History — page 379



Bethel Methodist Church is located 0.30 miles Northerly on the Elklick Road from the Williamsburg — Batam Road in Clermont County, Ohio.

The Church and Yard is located on the westerly side of the Elklick Road.



Bethel Methodist Church was built in 1867. This was the third house built on the farm of John Collins, in the valley of East Fork of the Little Miami River, in Clermont County of Ohio. The first house was built in 1807 as a Log Meeting House. This was replaced by one built in 1818. In this picture Mrs. Robert Steelman, and daughters Bertha and Susie are shown standing near the grave of John Collins.

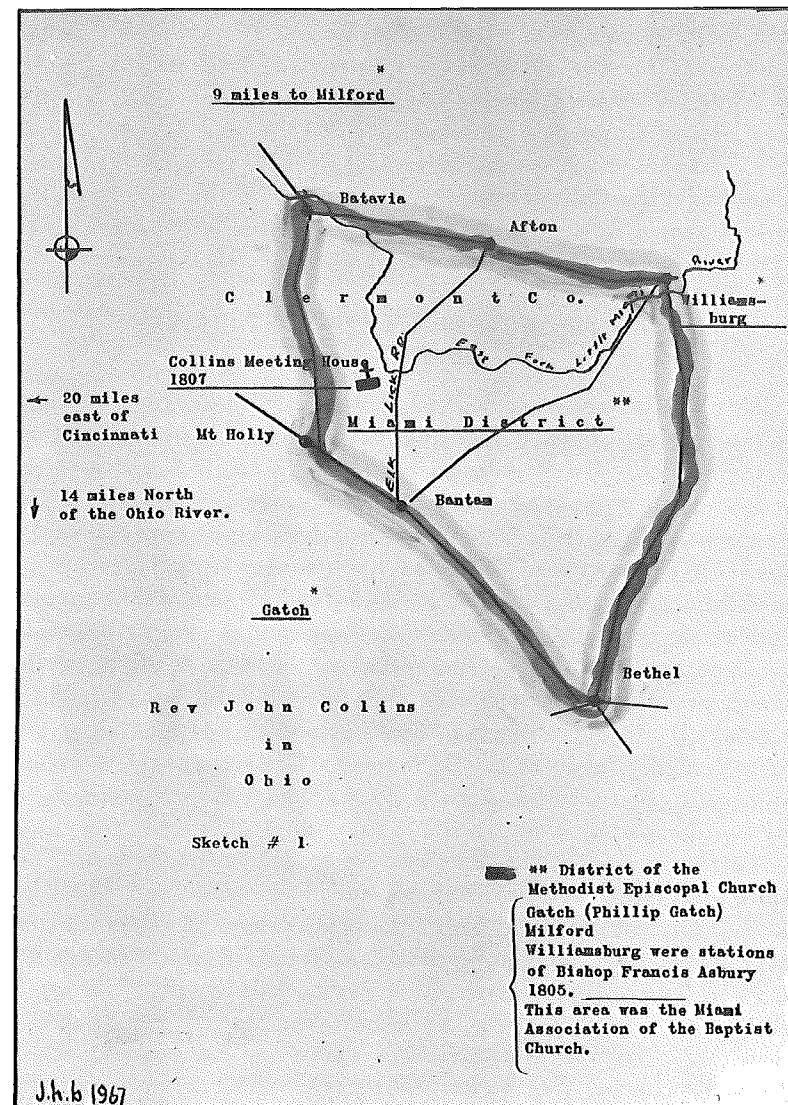
FOOTNOTES (Continued)

8. SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN COLLINS: JUSTICE JOHN McLEAN Wormstedt & Poe: 1854
9. Rev. Benjamin Fisler (1769-1854) later became a medical doctor and settled in Port Elizabeth.
The Presiding Elder was the Rev. John Merrick.
- The Beginning of Methodism in Southernmost Jersey: Robert Bevis Steelman: 1962: List of the Circuit Riders: — page 85.
10. The Rev. Learner Blackman, (1781-1815): An Essay on Methodist Biography: by Robert Bevis Steelman: — pages 15 & 22.
- 10b. Journal of Richard Sneath, 1751-1824 contained in the History of the Bethel Methodist Church, Gloucester County: by Hazel B. Simpson: — page 37 — 107.
11. The Preaching Stations of Benjamin Abbott in the Jerseys: Joseph Henry Bennett: 1962:
Phillip Gatch, 1751-1835, converted in 1772 under the preaching of Nathan Perigau. He served on the Greenwich or Mantua Creek in South Jersey in 1773.
12. See Map of Cincinnati.
13. ibid.
14. Historical Atlas of Religions in America by Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pages 44, 74.
15. Journal of Francis Asbury: Vol II page 615.
16. ibid Vol. II page 480.
17. History of Clermont and Brown Counties: Byron Williams 1913: Hobart: — page 349.
"In 1807 a log meeting house built on a large lot, donated from his farm, Called Collons Chapel, then took the name of "Old Bethel".
18. See the Sketch #3 of the Bethel Methodist Church and Yard with photograph:
19. Search is being made for the sons of John and Sarah Collins.
20. Halls History of Atlantic City and County: 1900: page — 385, 386.
21. Rev. Learner Blackman, brother-in-law of John Collins was drowned while crossing the Ohio River, returning from a visit to his sister Sarah B. Collins.

Some sources write that there was a ferry at Maysville and the road ran to Ripley in Ohio to Bethel, Batam and Afton. Afton was near John Collins farm. Learner may have lost his life here:

* * * *

(Joseph Henry Bennett)



DELAWARE CONFERENCE CHURCHES

In June of 1965 the Churches of the former Delaware Conference that were located within the bounds of the Southern New Jersey Conference became a part of the Conference. Since a brief history of these Churches is not included in the **Methodist Trail**, the history of our conference published in 1961, it was decided to use this yearbook as a means of bringing the history of these new Churches of our Conference to your attention. Below is a brief historical sketch of eight of these Churches. More will be published in the next issue of **The Historical Trail**. (Ed. Note)

HAMILTON MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH Atlantic City

Hamilton Memorial Methodist Church had its humble beginning in the year of 1920 as a Church School. It was located in the nine hundred block of Baltic Avenue. It was organized to fulfill a spiritual need in this section of the community. Rev. A. L. Martin, the Pastor of Asbury M.E. Church found it difficult to minister to the needs of his members who lived in this section and sensed the need for another church. After surveying the section with two members of his parish, Mrs. Louise Cottman and Mrs. Maggie Bailey, a Sunday School was set up. Due to its rapid growth, in a few months it was necessary to find new quarters. The location was over Lip-comba Hall at Delaware and Baltic Avenues. It was then organized as a Mission Church of the Philadelphia District, and was served by Local Preachers from Asbury Church, under the guidance of the Rev. A. L. Martin.

On March 5, 1923 the church moved to 817 Baltic Avenue. This same year the Council of Bishops met in Atlantic City. The Rev. J. T. Fletcher, who was Superintendent of the Philadelphia District at that time, brought some of the visiting Bishops to see the Mission Church. By a statement of Bishop Hamilton, "If we would name the Church after him, he would give aid and assistance in some way," the Mission became known as Hamilton Memorial Methodist Church. Through the years the Church continued to grow, and finally changed its status from a Mission to a well organized Church, accepting and fulfilling all its obligations and responsibilities to the now dissolved Delaware Conference of the Methodist Church. Since 1940 the church has been in its present location.

Those who served as pastors are William H. Horner; Robert Townsend; Daniel L. Ridout; John Parker, Frederick Kershaw, Dr. Walter R. Hazzard, Hooker D. Davis, and Cyrus W. Derrickson. The Rev. Charles E. Kiah is the present minister.

JOHN WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH Bridgeton

In the year of 1896 a small group of Christians, having moved into the city of Bridgeton from the surrounding communities, saw the need for a Methodist Church. They organized and established the John Wesley Methodist Church. The new congregation held its services in a rented meeting hall at Vine and Glass Streets. The Rev. G. M. Landin, Pastor of the Springfield Circuit served as the first spiritual leader. During the Annual Conference of 1897 the church was added to the Springfield Circuit.

The congregation continued to grow under the leadership of Rev. G. T. Fields, who served the circuit from 1897-1900. The Rev. E. S. Maloney was appointed to the charge in 1900.

The Church increased in membership until a larger sanctuary was desired by all. The church moved to Orange Street and remained there for a short time. The Rev. Solomon Hammond (1902-1904) purchased the first building, located on Grove Street for approximately \$600.

Under the administration of Rev. B.W. Berry (1905-1911) the mortgage was cancelled. The membership, not being satisfied with the location, started to plan for a new building and site.

The Rev. Haman Ward (1911-1913) was pastor when the church purchased a lot at South Avenue and Eagle Street, where the present building still stands. This congregation of Methodist Christians, stands today conscious of their heritage and bound together in a spirit of humility.

(Howard E. Anderson)

FERRY AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH Camden

Seven persons met in the basement of Job Polk at 1844 Kosuth Street and laid the foundation for a Methodist Episcopal Church in this village, and named it Scott's M.E. Church. In 1858 a lot was purchased and a small church built on Holy Street near Ferry Road.

The membership grew and in 1877 a larger structure was erected on Phillip Street between Central and Ferry Avenues. The financial burden became too heavy, and it was agreed to leave this structure. For a while there was no church home.

In 1888 with the aid of The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, lots were secured on the south west corner of Ferry Avenue and Eighth Street. A tabernacle was built on the rear of

the lots and used until the first story was completed. The name was changed to Ferry Avenue M. E. Church. After many ups and downs, a second story was completed in 1893.

Renovations were made in 1906 and in 1907 Ferry Avenue was host for the Delaware Annual Conference. From time to time, renovations have been made, and financial responsibilities met. In 1909 the new parsonage was first occupied.

In 1940 after the union of the M.E. Church, the M.E. Church South and the M.P. Church; the name was changed to Ferry Avenue Methodist Church. In June 1965, after the Central Jurisdiction was disbanded, there was no longer a Delaware Conference. We then became members of the Southern New Jersey Methodist Conference.

Pastors who have served us are: Benjamin Gibbs, Stephen Johns, Samuel Marshall; Rev. Mr. Davis, Isaiah Broughton, John Pierce, Peter Burrows, T. M. Hubbard, John Holly, William Cole, John Campbell, James Scott, Thomas Als, E. E. Parker, J. C. Dunn, H. A. Monroe, R. G. Riley, E. O. Parker, J. R. Waters, F.J. Handy, R. G. Waters, Daniel Quillin, C. B. Miles, James Fasset, George Geddis, Martin McKenney, Douglass Collins and Clarence Bagwell.

At the present time, 1967, we have a three-year Stewardship Crusade to help in purchasing more land to build a modern church for our congregation.

(C. W. Bagwell)

ST. JOHN METHODIST CHURCH Fordville

Previous to the year 1867, the Methodist Church people of Fordville and vicinity, in an attempt to build for themselves a church, had a most unique experience. It was an experience which would have daunted a less determined people. Jacob and Adrian Pierce with the help of a few faithful co-workers erected the first building for public worship in Fordville.

With many discouragements in the year 1865 the building was dedicated with the Rev. Simon Taylor as pastor. Fordville then became one of the preaching points known as Bridgeton and Goshen Circuit of the Delaware River District.

The Rev. J. H. Blackiston came to Fordville in 1924. Due to his energetic leadership in 1925, a very extensive remodeling was done. During the twenty-three years that Mr. Blackiston served he proved to be a true man of God. With his outstanding ability and the cooperation of the members it was possible to rebuild again in 1941.

The Rev. William M. Tasco accepted this charge in 1949 and began an evangelistic campaign of Kingdom Building. The membership was greatly increased making it necessary to enlarge the building. A new modern church has been made by adding to the old building thus tripling the seating capacity and modernizing the church throughout with heating system, semi-air conditioning, indirect lighting, sound-proof nursery, office, new pews, modern divided chancel, rest rooms, and Sunday School rooms in the basement. The total cost of the building was about \$45,000. Finished in the winter of 1953 the entire debt was paid off by 1963. This work could not have been accomplished except by the loyal effort of the members and friends with their financial support, their faith and prayers to Almighty God.

The Rev. A. A. Berry is the present pastor. Descendents of the first founders are still in the congregation.

(H. W. Hughes and Elizabeth Coombs Carney)

ASBURY METHODIST CHURCH Merchantville

The Asbury Methodist Church was founded and erected in the year 1857. It was known, then, as The Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church. The Rev. William Perry Gibson, the pastor. The congregation, at that time, was part of the Mt. Zion circuit, under the Presiding Elder of the N.J. Conference (White) who made quarterly visits to the charge.

The building then was on the corner of Second and Centre Streets. After 21 years, it was sold and the building used for a hall. It was then rebuilt on its present site on Wisteria Ave. This new building was not completed until the year 1882, at a cost of \$900.00.

In the year 1927, this church was torn down and a new one erected, on the same site, at a cost of \$16,000.00. Much of the finished work was left incomplete, even though the structure was used for service. A new parsonage was also built.

Since that time, many changes have been made. This church has been a member of the Delaware Conference of the Methodist Church, Central Jurisdiction. Many pastors have served well this charge.

It is now a part of the Southern New Jersey Conference, Trenton District. The Rev. Charles William Cannon has been pastor of Asbury since 1963.

The Church has made many improvements throughout the years and is now in the midst of a vast church property improvement program. The congregation, as well as the community it serves, has changed and grown.

(Katherine B. Henry)

ASBURY METHODIST CHURCH Pleasantville

In 1898 Asbury Church of Atlantic City recognized that a number of its members were moving to Pleasantville and it did not want to lose them from Methodism, so it was decided to start a mission and that the pastor, the Reverend F. H. Butler, be the pastor of the mission as well. The mission had its beginning in the home of Brother and Sister Chase. In the spring of 1900 a lot at Washington Avenue and Doughty Road was purchased and a building erected at a cost of \$1300.00. By 1908 the mission was completely free of debt and the membership was growing quite rapidly and in 1911 the mission was moved from Washington Avenue to the back of the lot at Bayview Avenue and the Shore Fast Line Road. The Asbury mission was now in much need of a large church and in July of 1913 the trustees were informed by Rev. H. J. Belting that Salem Church was disposing of their frame church since they were to build a new stone structure. The entire Old Salem Church was then moved, including furniture, to Bayview Avenue, the location of the church at the time of merger in 1966.

ASBURY - SALEM MERGER

On Wednesday evening, October 19, 1966 it was voted to merge the two congregations. Worship began together on Sunday, November 6th, of the same year and it was agreed that the name of the newly merged church would be the Salem Methodist Church.

The interesting part of the merger is the fact that both congregations had previously worshipped in the same church building separately and now worship in the present Salem Church together. The pulpit furniture used by both congregations in the Old Asbury Church has been preserved and placed in the chapel adjoining the church sanctuary which had been designated as the Asbury Chapel. Together the new Salem Methodist Church is bearing its witness for Christ to the whole community.

(John L. Ewing)

JOHN WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH Port Norris

The John Wesley Methodist Church was established in South Port Norris, formerly called Shell Pile, in April of 1928 by the Rev. William H. Johns, then serving Cape May Charge. The membership of the church was composed of Christian men and women who had come to Port Norris from such Maryland towns as Crisfield, Marion Station and Fairmount.

The first church was a remodeled dance hall rented for \$25 a month. Later this building was purchased for \$1,800 and enlarged with lumber salvaged from a burned out theatre and saloon. This church was called the Johns' Memorial Church.

September 26, 1954 the present John Wesley Church first opened for services. It was built at a cost of \$30,000 which was paid for and the mortgage burned on September 28, 1959. The church has since expanded and erected a new social hall, costing \$17,232, installed new pews, pulpit and choir furniture.

The Rev. John E. Bishop has been pastor since 1939.

RHODES TEMPLE METHODIST CHURCH Saddlertown

Charles Rhodes of Haddonfield, N.J. noticed that in the colored settlement of Saddlertown in Haddon Township the children were obliged to walk a long distance to the colored school on Grove Street in Haddonfield. These same people had no place of worship within easy reach of their homes. Mr. Rhodes induced himself to build a two story house, twenty-five feet by forty feet, in Saddlertown. The upper room he had fitted for a meeting house, and First Day Bible School room. The building was opened as a meeting house in the second story on February 26, 1893.

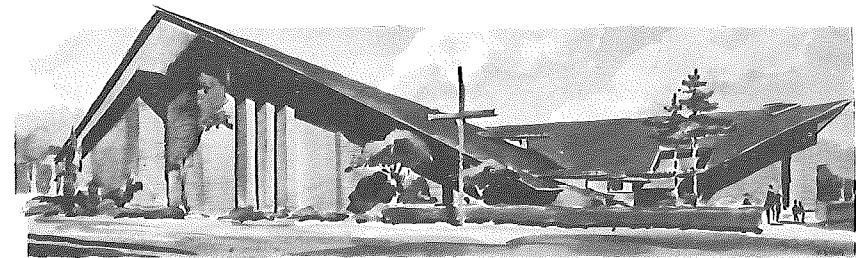
Mr. Rhodes contacted the Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal congregation near Snow Hill, now known as Lawnside. There a large number met, probably 125, and to them, he explained his object in building the house, and expressing his concern in having the management placed under the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The church was named Rhodes Temple M. E. Church. Eight members of Mt. Zion M. E. Church became founders of Rhodes Temple. They were Robert Hankinson, Elizabeth Hankinson, Joseph Hankinson, Jefferson Fisher, Mary Ann Fisher, Mose Cornelius, Margaret Fussell and Isaac Saddler.

Pastors who have served Rhodes Temple are the Reverends: Thomas S. Als, John Parker, J. W. Brown, H. T. Johnson, E. O. Parker, H. T. G. Jennings, J. I. Peaco, S. N. Emptage, C. Johnson, H. R. Coleman, J. L. Sawyer, W. E. Rodgers, H. A. Bailey, E. N. Neal, H. Scott, E. Jackson, A. L. Scriber, R. Fisher, I. H. Thompson, C. W. Brown, S. L. Wilkins, J. R. Bowden, G. W. Cuff, A. Berry, J. Hunter, T. E. Cameron, M. D. Brooks and C. W. Bagwell.

(C. W. Bagwell)

METHODISM IN MOORESTOWN



NEW SANCTUARY OF FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, MOORESTOWN, N.J.
TO BE CONSECRATED OCTOBER 29, 1967

Over the past 150 years several histories of the First Methodist Church in Moorestown, New Jersey, have been compiled. None, however, go back to the days when Rev. Richard Sneath travelled the circuit in 1799 and when Bishop Asbury passed through Moorestown in 1802.

The first missionaries were sent to this area in 1769 by John Wesley and a Methodist revival swept New Jersey in 1797. As early as 1773 John King and William Waters were appointed by the Philadelphia Conference to labor in New Jersey, and Moorestown was a part of this one preaching circuit.

There is a record that in the late 1700's Rev. Joseph Pilmoor stopped in Moorestown on his way to New Mills which is now called Pemberton. Later when Moorestown became a part of the Burlington Circuit Rev. Sneath travelled this way but he could only visit the Moorestown group about once a month as he had many communities to visit and the only form of transportation was by horseback or stagecoach.

From the diary of Richard Sneath we get an idea of the spiritual atmosphere that pervaded this small group of believers. In the summer of 1799 he writes:

"Rode to the town of Moorestown the first place in the Burlington Circuit that I came into and put up at Hugh Hollinshead's. On August 6th - preached at Moorestown. I believe it is a time that will be remembered. September 3rd - preached at Moorestown. Then it was unusually powerful. The people were dissolved before God - some scarcely able to sit in class meeting - it was so effecting. October 20 - preached at Moorestown - a happy time. I expect some of the people thought we were mad - I suppose some were as drunk as with wine." In 1800 on January 2nd, he wrote: "Preached in Moorestown to a large congregation - some were much affected. Lord, revive the work in this place."

Another preacher of note in New Jersey from 1772 - 1775 was Benjamin Abbot, a fiery Methodist preacher of holiness whose work during the American Revolution, almost single-handedly, kept the fires of Methodism burning in New Jersey. From the book "History of the (Episcopalian) Church in Burlington" written by a Mr. Odell, an Episcopalian clergyman, comes this quote: "The state of religion in general in my mission continues to be not unpromising notwithstanding some inconvenience arising from time to time among us from frequent visits by a number of Methodistic Emisaries who are taking uncommon pains to get a footing in this County." Mr. Odell goes on to say that the less notice taken of these people the better and their zeal might die out.

Riding along Kings Highway from Haddonfield Bishop Asbury came into Moorestown on May 14, 1802. From an entry in his Journal we read,

"We rode to Moorestown and held a meeting at Hugh Hollinshead's. Brother Whatcoat spoke upon 'The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power' - it was late and I therefore occupied fifteen minutes in exhorting against 'making light of the gospel.' "

It is interesting to remember that in the early 1800's we were a very young country, still having trouble with England which brought on the War of 1812. That was the year that Moorestown built its Town Hall, a part of which was used for awhile for a gathering place for the Class Meetings of the Methodists.

So, it is not surprising because of these dedicated men who came from Philadelphia by small boats and rode horseback up and down Kings Highway from Burlington to Salem, that a strong desire grew among the Methodists that they should build a church in Moorestown. It is interesting to note that the Society of Friends which was already well established was sympathetic in aiding the Methodists to establish themselves in the town. Also, a certain Edward Harris, an Episcopalian, invited the Methodists to hold their Class Meetings in his home.

In 1815 the group decided that the time had come to build and we salute those hardy souls who established the "First Methodist Meeting House in a plain brick building without bell tower or spire." It was located on the south side of Main Street by the great oak whose vine-covered stump stood, until the winter of 1965, at the corner of the Community House property as a reminder of days long gone. On August 21st, 1815 Trustees were elected and they applied to the Court of Common Pleas for incorporation which was granted.

Thirty years later the membership doubled from 50 to 100 primarily because of a revival conducted by the Rev. Thomas Stewart, the Presiding Elder. It was always a time of rejoicing in those days when the Presiding Elder came. Earlier than this in 1826, Charles Pitman, the Presiding Elder of Southern New Jersey, visited Moorestown and in his book "The Life of Charles Pitman, D.D." published in 1887 he writes;

"There was not public conveyances of travel in the lower part of the State, except the old fashioned stage coaches which generally took a full day to come from the interior or sea coast to Philadelphia - and would make the return trip the next day or day after. The minister came by horse and buggy. But it was a great day when the presiding elder came."

In 1858 the Moorestown Church became a separate station and was no longer a part of a circuit. It was in this year that the members decided that they must build a large edifice and so they purchased from Rachel S. Andrews the property across from the Town Hall for \$800.00. So another brick building was built on this site and the Trustees kept the pulpit desk, seats and such fixtures that were moveable and these helped to furnish the new church sanctuary. In a chapter on Burlington County in the Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey there is a statement that reads "Moorestown contains two hotels, three stores, a hundred dwellings, five houses of public worship, of which the Methodist Church is a

substantial brick structure in the central part of the village." This second building was completed in 1869 and was later renovated and beautified when the Crowell family gave the gothic facade for the front of the church.

The church grew along with the town. During the first 120 years one hundred ministers were appointed to the church. In the last thirtyone years there have been only four. Many of the townspeople will remember Reverend W. R. Sayre who came in 1935 as the 100th. minister and stayed until 1948. He was followed by Reverend L. B. Hawk and it was during his pastorate that there was talk of necessary expansion. The membership of the church grew and the Sunday School became so large that the Masonic Hall and then the Community House had to house part of the school. There was no doubt that this was a growing church in an expanding community. So that on July 22nd, 1953 at a special Quarterly Conference meeting it was voted that the Board of Trustees be authorized to purchase a property from Mr. Irving Hollingshead consisting of six acres at the corner of Camden and Pleasant Valley Avenues. The Educational Building was completed in 1957 and the first communion service was held there on September 1st. with a special consecration service at which Bishop Fred Pierce Corson presided. After thirteen years of service in Moorestown the Hawks received another appointment and Dr. Andrew C. Braun became the minister. It was during this time that the mortgage was satisfied on the building and a successful financial campaign for the new sanctuary carried on. When Reverend Charles W. Marker came in 1964 building plans were being seriously considered for the new sanctuary and now the dream is becoming a reality. We look back on the past years when the circuit riders nurtured the faith and brought Methodism to Moorestown. Their dedication is appreciated, as is also the faith and labors of all those who have brought the church to this moment of realization of a building worthy of the worship of God.

(Mrs. Robert M. Moore)

ALONG THE ASBURY TRAIL

A compilation of the Preaching Places of Bishop Francis Asbury within the bounds of the Southern New Jersey Conference, continued from Volume 2, Number 2, 1966.

STATION	DATES	REMARKS
MOORESTOWN	5/14/1802	Asbury preached at Hugh Hollingshead's. A preaching station on the Burlington Circuit as early as 1799. The first church was built in 1815. ⁵³ See article on Moorestown elsewhere in this Yearbook.
MORRIS RIVER (See Port Elizabeth)		
MOUNT HOLLY	5/ 2/1776 8/11/1783 10/16/1786 10/ 8/1789 4/19/1807 5/ 7/1813	Mount Holly appears as a preaching place on the early circuits as early as 1776. It was not until 1810 that the first church was built on Brainard Street. Earlier preaching had been in the Brainard School and at times in the Baptist M.H. Asbury's visit of 1807 evidently revised Methodism here. ⁵⁴
MOUNT ZION	4/29/1806	Original church built in 1801. Destroyed by fire the present church, near New Egypt, built in 1837 is no longer used. ⁵⁵ (See Fuller Horner)
MT. PLEASANT	5/ 1/1809	The present Freneau, named in honor of the Revolutionary War poet, Philip Freneau. It is near Matawan.

STATION	DATES	REMARKS	STATION	DATES	REMARKS
MURPHY'S	10/12/1786	John Murphy. His home was the scene of the first Methodist preaching in Salem County by Abraham Whitworth in 1772. Benjamin Abbott was the leader of the class in his home. He later moved to Fairton and helped start Methodism there and in Bridgeton. Murphy's home is still standing near the Friendship Church in Salem County. He is buried in the churchyard of First Methodist Church, Bridgeton. ⁵⁶ (See also Pittsgrove)	NEWMAN'S	4/28/1809	Joseph Newman lived on Shark River near Hamilton in Monmouth County. ⁶⁰
NEW BRUNSWICK	10/19/1772 8/29/1786 9/ 4/1792 7/ 1/1794 9/26,7/1795 7/24/1797 6/14/1798 9/29/1798 8/19/1800 5/20/1802 6/ 7/1804 5/16/1805 5/ 2/1806 5/ 1/1809 5/ 8/1810 5/11/1813	This town, made famous as home of Rutgers University, was an important stop on the stage route between Philadelphia and New York. Often Asbury only "passed through" New Brunswick. On his visit of 1795 he witnessed the building of the Brunswick Bridge. He called it "the grandest of the kind I have ever seen in America." Asbury's first mention of Methodism was in 1797. His first sermon was in 1798. The present church was built in 1876. ⁵⁷	NEW MILLS	3/30,1/1772 5/27,8/1772 6/17,18/1772 7/28,9/1772 5/11/1773 5/1/1776 5/4,5/1776 8/14/1782 9/12/1784 10/16/1786 10/ 7/1789 10/ 1/1795 6/13/1800 5/15,16/1802 4/28/1806 4/18/1807 5/8,9/1813	Pemberton. The home of Asbury's friend, grandfather William Budd and other members of the Budd family. One of the earliest M.H. in the State was built here in 1776. Capt. Webb organized the Society, probably in 1769. The present church dates from 1894. ⁶¹
NEW ENGLAND-TOWN	8/21/1783 10/ 8/1786	The present Fairton. The first Methodist Class was started here about 1790 by Michael Swing, John Murphy's son-in-law. The Swing M.H. was erected about 1819. The present church in 1867. ⁵⁸	PEMBERTON (See New Mills)		
NEWKIRK, JOSEPH	4/12,13/1809	A neighbor of John Murphy in Pittsgrove. Entertained Asbury & Henry Boehm the snowy night of April 12, 1809. When he died, his home and farm were willed to the church which still owns it. ⁵⁹ (See also Pittsgrove and Murphy's).	PENNS NECK	4/24/1814	Pennsville. Methodism was started here by Benjamin Abbott in 1775. The first church stood where the cemetery is at the intersection of the Fort Mott and Salem Roads. ⁶²
			PENNY HILL	2/20/1781 8/ /1782 9/12/1784 9/30/1795	Wrightstown. On his first visit Asbury mentions "our old German mother K" who had been blind for 50 years but was brought to God by the Methodists. ⁶³ A new church in a new location now serves the Fort Dix-MaGuire Air Force Base area.
			PENNYTOWN	8/ 8/1796 7/ 7/1806	Pennington. An old cemetery about 1 mile W of Pennington School marks the site of a New Light M.H. taken over by the Methodists in 1776. ⁶⁴ (See Jonathan Bunn, also The Founding of the Pennington School by Charles R. Smyth in Vol. 1, No. 1, 1962).

STATION	DATES	REMARKS
PERKINTOWN	4/19/1814	Salem County near Penns Grove. A station on the Salem Circuit in 1799. ⁶⁵
PITTSGROVE	5/12/1802 4/15/1807 4/13/1809 4/26/1814	The home of Benjamin Abbott and John Murphy (See above). Home of the first Methodist Society in Salem County. From here Methodism spread through Salem County, Cumberland, Atlantic and old Monmouth Counties, largely through the labors of Abbott. ⁶⁶
PLEASANT MILLS (See Forks)		
POLHEMUS CHAPEL (See Kettle Creek)		
PORT ELIZABETH	9/17, 21/1785 10/ 6/1786 4/17/1809	The first Methodist Society in Cumberland County organized here by Benjamin Abbott in 1778. The present church erected in 1827 is the oldest Methodist Church building in the County. The parsonage for the Cumberland Circuit was here and is still standing. ⁶⁷
POTTER'S CHURCH	9/26/1786 9/ 7/1791	At Goodluck, now Lanoka Harbor. Built by Thomas Potter in 1766 as a M.H. for all denominations. The Methodists bought it in 1809. ⁶⁸
PRICE'S	5/24/1772 6/25/1772	Squire Price lived between Greenwich and Gloucester. He was evidently a prominent Methodist in Philadelphia and across the River. ⁶⁹
PRINCETON	10/19/1772 6/11/1773 5/24/1791	Though there was early Methodist preaching here, the church was not organized until 1847. ⁷⁰
PYLE, SIMON	4/30/1806	(1759-1822). A Circuit Rider, he located to a farm in Lower Freehold in 1792. ⁷¹
RECKLA'S	6/14/1800	Recklesstown, near Jobtown.

FOOTNOTES

53. METHODISM IN MOORESTOWN, History written for the 150th Anniversary of the church, 1965.
54. JOURNAL entries, especially, II, 536.
55. Asbury, II, 503.
56. Steelman, 27, 69, 70.
57. See JOURNAL references.
58. Robert B. Steelman, CUMBERLAND'S HALLOWED HERITAGE (Bridgeton: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1965), 15.
59. THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE FRIENDSHIP M.E. CHURCH (Elmer: Elmer Times Printing House, 1956), 18.
60. See JOURNAL references.
61. Asbury, I, 185, 186. METHODIST TRAIL, 269.
62. TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, 1782 to 1958. Booklet prepared for the opening of the New Sanctuary, September 28, 1958.
63. Asbury, I, 400.
64. METHODIST TRAIL, 269, Field Notes.
65. SALEM CIRCUIT'S STEWARD BOOK, 76.
66. George E. Wolfbrandt, HISTORY OF THE FRIENDSHIP METHODIST CHURCH compiled for the 190th Anniversary. Steelman, BEGINNING OF METHODISM IN SOUTHERNMOST JERSEY, 25ff.
67. Steelman, BEGINNING METH., 28, 29. ALONG ASBURY TRAIL, 15.
68. Joseph Henry Bennett, "The Thomas Potter M.H.," THE HISTORICAL TRAIL, 1964, 5-7.
69. See JOURNAL references.
70. METHODIST TRAIL, 272.
71. Asbury, II, 503f.

(Robert Bevis Steelman)

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